



Congressman Dave Reichert
Washington's 8th Congressional District

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REICHERT PRAISES NATIONAL PARKS LEGISLATION

Bill will address National Parks' resource challenges

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Dave Reichert today applauded introduction of the *National Park Centennial Act of 2005*. The legislation will provide national parks with a new source of funding for maintenance and preservation needs and offer the public a way to make a personal difference by authorizing a check-off on individual tax returns to benefit the national parks.

“Investing in our national parks makes sense – Mount Rainier generates more than \$35 million each year for the small communities in surrounding areas,” said Reichert. “It is important that we preserve our landmark national resources for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.”

This week, on the 133rd anniversary of the creation of Yellowstone National Park, the House will begin a series of hearings about the adequacy of the budgets of agencies within the Department of Interior, including the Park Service.

“We’ve got many reasons to invest in our national parks,” said National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) President Tom Kiernan, “But we should need only one: the national parks are our heritage and need our help.”

“Last summer we read headlines about shortened visitor center hours, closed trails, and canceled ranger talks at Olympic and Mount Rainier,” said Heather Weiner, northwest regional director for NPCA. “Congressman Reichert has got it right. It’s time to stop taking for granted Mount Rainier, Olympic and all of the northwest’s crown jewels. It’s time to pass the Centennial Act and put park funding above politics.”

First introduced in the House of Representatives in October 2004, the Act seeks to increase funding through 2016—the 100th birthday of the Park Service. The legislation authorizes new funding for the parks from the general treasury and from a voluntary check-off on federal tax returns. The House version of the bill has X co-sponsors. A companion bill has not yet been introduced in the U.S. Senate.

Parallel to House introduction, NPCA released a report today, *Faded Glory: Top 10 Reasons to Reinvest in America's National Park Heritage*, calling attention to 10 critical affects of insufficient funding ranging from dilapidated buildings to rampant poaching, threatened artifacts, shoddy roads and trails, and cutbacks in educational programs for school groups and park visitors. The report is available online at www.npca.org/report/investinparks.asp. Similar top 10 lists were released today by park supporters across the country, including the community of Forks, Washington, which is profiled in the NPCA report. National park visitors are encouraged to post their own list of 10 reasons the national parks should be funded at www.npca.org/scrapbook

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Copies of the report and photos are available upon request.

NPCA—Protecting Parks for Future Generations®

Since 1919, the nonpartisan National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. NPCA, its members, and partners work together to protect the park system and preserve our nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage for generations to come.

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